

how they kept themselves alive. That's how they exercised the one most important muscle out there, and that was their brain.

Just a couple days ago, Mr. Speaker, marked the 39th anniversary of their release, February 12, 1973. So, although we were not here in this body—we were at home—I felt it appropriate to come up and talk about the anniversary.

Lieutenant Commander Shumaker holds a near and dear place in my heart. He happens to be my uncle. When my wife and I had our first child, we decided to name her Harper after him.

This is an example of the bravery that goes on each and every day for our men and women in uniform. Not a day goes by that I don't thank the good Lord for the men and women that are protecting our Nation each and every day. But I don't look at the picture of my uncle upon his capture and say it's never going to be that bad.

The stories are remarkable, and they continue to come in day and day out because they don't like to talk about them. This was a unique group of individuals that the American public was actually in support of. The Vietnam conflict wasn't very supported, but everybody in America was supportive of the POWs that were putting their lives on the line.

They would resist time and again from giving up information, and yet the North Vietnamese would continue to bring them in to try and torture them for additional information.

Mr. Speaker, we are blessed to have countless American heroes amongst us, but I am proudest of my Uncle Bob Shumaker.

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#### HONORING THE COURAGEOUS PATRIOTISM OF ACTIVE DUTY ARMY OFFICER LIEUTENANT COLONEL DANIEL DAVIS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Washington (Mr. McDERMOTT) for 5 minutes.

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, this country has many faces of bravery, and today I want to recognize the courageous patriotism of active duty Army officer Lieutenant Colonel Daniel Davis, who recently returned from a second tour in Afghanistan.

He traveled thousands of miles throughout the country, patrolled with American troops in eight provinces, and spoke to hundreds of Afghan and American security officials and civilians about conditions on the ground.

Convinced that senior leaders of this war, both uniformed and civilian, have intentionally and consistently misled the American people about the conditions in Afghanistan, Davis wrote an 84-page report challenging the military's assertion that the war in Afghanistan has been a success.

This report, which I read, was written at great risk to Lieutenant Colonel

Davis' military career and personal life, and it forces us to confront uncomfortable truths about the war in Afghanistan and about the decision-making that has led us to our current situation.

Davis reports:

Senior-ranking U.S. military leaders have so distorted the truth when communicating with the U.S. Congress and American people in regards to conditions on the ground in Afghanistan that the truth has become unrecognizable.

I strongly encourage every Member of Congress to read this report as soon as possible. It's like the Pentagon papers in its power. After reading it, you will find it impossible not to heed Davis' advice to hold public congressional hearings on the state of the Afghan war.

More than 5,500 Americans were killed or wounded in Afghanistan in 2011 alone. "How many more soldiers," he says, "must die in support of a mission that is not succeeding?" That is his question. Each and every one of us ought to ask himself or herself this difficult question. Even our intelligence agencies are skeptical about the Afghan war—if it is salvageable and if our objectives are realistic.

Last month, a National Intelligence Estimate given to President Obama painted a bleak picture about our efforts in Afghanistan. At current levels of foreign assistance by the U.S. and Europe, which will be hard to sustain under the budgetary pressures, the NIE does not forecast rapid improvements in Afghan security forces or governance or in the removal of the Taliban.

I fear that we have forgotten the difference between respect for our military leaders and unquestioning deference to them. Questioning the war's strategies and objectives and consequences all too often discredits one's patriotism and impugns one's motives. Yet that unflinching assessment is precisely what the lieutenant colonel implores us to do.

After 10 years in Afghanistan, what is the wisest course for us now?

Sadly, we cannot even begin to answer that question because the rampant over-classification of information has made it nearly impossible for Congress to fully oversee, evaluate and to, perhaps, recast our war efforts.

Recently, declassified information about the Afghan war exposed brutal realities that have been withheld from the public—American troops incidentally and accidentally killing Afghan civilians, widespread corruption in the U.S.-backed Karzai government and revelations about Pakistan's assistance to Afghan insurgents, to name just a few.

Not every American has traveled 9,000 miles and witnessed what Lieutenant Colonel Davis has seen, heard, and understood; but we can in this body, and must, begin to investigate the charges of deception and dishonesty in his report. For our democracy to work, congressional officials and the

public must have access to this type of information.

The American public, which bears the extraordinary cost of this war both in money and in pain, deserves to know the truth. The ancient Greek playwright Aeschylus cautioned: "In war, truth is the first casualty."

It is time to reclaim the truth of our war in Afghanistan by having congressional hearings. They should begin now. Some of us believe we ought to bring the troops home more quickly than the President, but we have to have hearings so that the American public will understand why it is this action should be taken.

#### THE DANNY THOMAS COMMEMORATIVE STAMP

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. COHEN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about the life and work of Danny Thomas and of the St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, which is located in Memphis, Tennessee.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of St. Jude's hospital and what would have been the 100th birthday of Danny Thomas. Commemorative postage stamps are one of the most visible and enduring ways that our Nation honors organizations and people. Today, the United States Postal Service will be celebrating the life and work of Danny Thomas with the commemorative stamp in my district of Memphis, Tennessee, at the St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

Danny Thomas was born on January 6, 1912, in Deerfield, Michigan. After saving enough money, he moved to Detroit to take up a show business career. One of his first jobs was on a radio show called "The Happy Hour Club," which is where he met his wife, Rose Marie Mantell. He met her on the show, and he escorted her home for 3 years, traveling together on a streetcar. Finally, he proposed. They were married in 1936, and they had three children whom the world pretty much knows—Marlo, Tony, and Terre.

When Rose Marie was about to give birth to their first child, Marlo, Danny Thomas was torn between his dedication to work and his responsibilities to his wife and his newborn daughter. Desperately, he sought relief in prayer. He knelt before the statue of St. Jude, the patron saint of hopeless causes, and begged for a sign. Should he or should he not remain in show business? He promised that if St. Jude showed him the way he would erect a shrine in his honor.

Danny went on to become one of the best loved entertainers of his era, starring in many TV shows and movies. From '53 to '64, he received five Emmy nominations for a starring role in "Make Room for Daddy," winning Best Actor Starring in a Regular Series in '53 and '54. The show also received an Emmy for Best New Situation Comedy